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The plague condition at Shanghai is grave, not so much from the number of cases which have been proved, 2 in all, but from the number which may have occurred undetected, the absolute impossibility of rat-proofing the average Chinese house, or of fumigating it so as to effectually destroy all vermin, and the almost if not quite insurmountable difficulties in the way of the health authorities.

The district in which occurred these 2 fatal cases and about 7 suspicious cases is the northwest section of the settlement, filled with godowns and the residence of a poor class of Chinese, and immediately surrounded outside the settlement by Chinese territory, over which the municipal authorities can exercise no control, and which is inhabited by the beggar class—living under the most insanitary conditions.

The local health department is acting energetically in the matter and is frankly placing the details of the situation before the medical men and the community, and hopes for the support of both. They are asking for authority to make the report of communicable diseases compulsory instead of optional, as at present, for authority to remove cases of plague and suspects to proper observation stations and hospitals, and for permission to demolish or otherwise destroy any houses deemed particularly dangerous. They intend to fumigate places where cases have occurred, with the purpose of destroying vermin, and will as far as possible surround such foci with rat-proof fences of iron wire before beginning the disinfection with the hope of destroying all rats on the premises. The public at large is to be offered prophylactic inoculations when desired.

Doctor Ransom further reported, November 9:

During the week ended November 5 there were reported 4 deaths from plague among natives. The fact that several foci exist so early in the outbreak and separated by rather considerable distances suggests the possibility that the disease has existed unrecognized among human beings for some time. The district in which the cases appeared is immediately on the border of the settlement of Shanghai, but beyond the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities or the consuls. The people living in the district transact business inside the settlement, and even if they could be excluded it would be impossible to exclude the dogs, rats, and fleas. The construction of native houses especially as to floors and roof, favors the harboring of rats.

ECUADOR.

GUAYAQUIL—Plague and Yellow Fever.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Parker reports, November 12:

The following report of sanitary conditions in Guayaquil and vicinity for the month of October, 1910, was received from the director of health:

Plague.—During the month of October there were reported 168 cases of plague with 58 deaths, an increase of 81 cases and 22 deaths over the preceding month. During the month Duran and Babahoyo each contributed one case.

Yellow fever.—During the same period there were reported 16 cases of this disease with 6 deaths, an increase of 13 in the number of cases and 4 in the number of deaths over the preceding month.

During the same period there were reported 324 deaths from all causes, which with an estimated population of 70,000 would give an annual mortality rate of 55.54 per 1,000 living. For the same period in 1909 there were 333 deaths from all causes.